

State Travel Office News



In the Spotlight

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Test your STO Knowledge
\$25 Starbucks Card
December Winner
Bejean Page
Labor—Anchorage



Upcoming Travel Desk Training

Date: January 22, 2009
From: 1:00 pm to 4:30 pm

For Juneau
Sign up when posted at:
<http://fin.admin.state.ak.us/dof/training/index.jsp>

To call-in:
Conference line available,
but limited.
Email:
kathy.adair@alaska.gov

State of Alaska Signs New Contract With Alaska Airlines

The State of Alaska has entered into a new contract with Alaska Airlines effective January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2010.

The State will no longer book fares through EasyBiz, but instead will receive up-front discounts for eligible State travel on all coach class published fares, which account for approximately 95% of markets. Under the previous contract, the State received \$5.85 worth of mileage on a \$350 ticket purchase. Under the new contract the State will receive at least \$7.00 off the purchase price of the

same ticket.

Vern Jones, the Chief Procurement Officer for the State, and Mark Eliason, president and owner of USTravel, the State's contracted travel management company, negotiated the contract with Alaska Airlines. Jones said, "We are very pleased with the terms of this contract and the savings the State will receive. The up-front savings are a real boon for the State."

Kim Garner, Director of the Division of Finance in the Department of Administration, that manages the State Travel

Office said, "We are excited about the new contract and believe the terms are a huge step forward in terms of savings and convenience."

The new contract terms provide savings across the board for eligible State travelers booking travel through the State Travel Office, including Medicaid beneficiaries. The State will no longer earn mileage on purchases, but retains its previously accrued mileage for future use. Also individual travelers will still earn personal mileage when they travel for the State.

AAM 60.080 Changes to Traveler Deviation

AAM 60.080 #8 Interruption or Deviation of Travel for Traveler Convenience has been amended as of January 1, 2009. The important facts are:

1. The STO will no longer accept personal credit cards for personal deviation.
2. Personal deviations that include routing changes or companion coupons will not be handled by the STO.
3. Extensions of dates on either end that increase the fare may be purchased by a State form of payment if the

department believes the fare difference can be recovered from the traveler's reimbursement after travel is complete.

4. If air travel with personal deviation cannot be booked through the STO, the department is required to obtain a fare quote from the STO for the State authorized dates, times, and destinations prior to travel that includes personal deviation. The traveler will book their transportation themselves and submit a copy of the ticket or itinerary showing the purchase price once travel is complete. The State will reimburse the

lesser amount of the ticket or STO fare quote.

5. New airfare contract rates are not allowable on personal deviation flights that include routing changes.

6. Hotels and cars will be booked through the STO for State authorized dates and times.

The booking request form has been modified so that travelers and travel desks can request a fare quote only as well as hotel and car reservations.

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See us on the Web!
<http://fin.admin.state.ak.us/dof/sto/index.jsp>

To subscribe sign up at:
<http://list.state.ak.us/guest/RemoteListSummary/travelofficeinfo>

*When preparing to travel,
lay out all your clothes and
all your money.
Then take half your clothes and
twice the money!*
Susan Heller

Test Your STO Knowledge

There will be a random drawing for a prize from the answers submitted by January 15, 2009 to:

doa.dof.statetraveloffice@alaska.gov

1. What is the effective date of the new contract with Alaska Airlines?
2. Can the contract rate be used for personal deviation flights that include routing changes?
3. What is the new mileage rate for business travel?
4. What amount of mileage paid by the State for moving is taxable to the traveler?
5. What are five pieces of information required under the TSA's new Secure Flight Program?

Special point of interest:
Prize winnings from the contest are considered non-cash compensation, and will be included as W2 earnings.

IRS Changes to 2009 Business Mileage Rates

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has decreased its optional standard mileage rates for 2009.

The change takes into account the recent decrease in gas prices. The new rates are higher than last year, but slightly lower than the 58.5 cents per mile that was implemented for the second half of 2008 as a special

adjustment due to the spike in gas prices.

Beginning January 1, 2009 the new IRS standard mileage rates will be as follows:

- 55 cents per mile for business miles driven
- 24 cents per mile for medical or moving purposes

When an employee receives payment for business related travel that exceeds an IRS allowable rate, the excess amount is taxable.

The State pays 55 cents per mile for moving purposes. Since the State pays mileage for moving above the IRS allowable rate, 31 cents per mile is reported as taxable income.

TSA Secure Flight Program

The TSA's Secure Flight Program will be phased in several stages over the coming year. Selected airlines have volunteered to implement the program beginning in mid-January 2009. Other domestic carriers will be required to participate in May and June, with international carriers joining in late 2009.

Under Secure Flight, passengers must be prepared to present the following data to travel agents or airlines when making flight reservations:

Last Name as shown on their government issued identification

First Name as shown on their government issued identification

Middle Name as shown on their government issued identification

Date of Birth

Gender

Passport Information when needed for travel

Specific information given to passengers whose names

have triggered "false positive" matches to watch lists in the past.

Passengers who decline to provide this information to the airlines in advance of their travel plans will face additional screening and delays at the airport, and could possibly face denied boarding.

More information will be forthcoming in the near future to help the traveling public understand how to comply with the Secure Flight program's requirements.



It's the New Year! Time, once again, to start the New Year out right! It's time to make those new year resolutions to lose weight, save money, find a new job, have a better marriage, find Mr./Mrs. Right, be more organized, be more positive, and spend more time with the family, etc. These are all realistic resolutions, aren't they? Then, why do they reappear on the list every year?

How can it be different this year? Here are some ways

to accomplish that goal:

- Limit the number of resolutions
- Analyze the resolutions to identify what is truly realistic at this point in time
- Identify challenging roadblocks that could prevent the change
- Take it one day at a time
- Find a support system
- Replace the word "TRY" with "I WILL," for a stronger and more positive approach
- Keep a journal

New Year Resolutions

- Focus on staying positive



The New Year has 365 days in it, so it is NEVER too late to make that change! The calendar is only full of days and numbers; a life is full of memories, love, peace and joy, so make each moment count. Make TODAY be the start of what you truly want your life to look and feel like. You CAN do it!